

# **Irish Radion Transmitters Society Radio News Bulletin Sunday August 29th 2021**

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## **Paddy Devine, Ei9FY, Silent Key**

His friend Shane Halpin informs us of the death of Paddy Devine of Begrath, Tullyallen, Co Louth. Paddy, Ei9FY will be missed by his friends Paul Ei4GA, Doug Ei2CN and all who knew him, a true gentleman. He died on Friday, the 20th of August at the age of 85 and will be buried on Monday in Mellifont Parish. May he Rest in Peace. We shall now observe a minute's silence in honour of Paddy Devine, Ei9FY

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## **Upcoming Contests**

### **UK EI Counties Contest**

A quick reminder for the first of 14 one-hour contests from 1st of September onwards. This Wednesday the UKEICC starts its contest series with the first of seven SSB contests, at 2000 UTC, on 80m, between 3650 and 3750 kHz. See [ukeicc.com](http://ukeicc.com) for details, or better still, hear You on the air on Wednesday evening.

### **SSB Field Day next weekend**

The IRTS SSB Field Day takes place next weekend, it runs for 24 hours from 1300 UTC on Saturday 4th September. There are separate 24-hour Open and Restricted sections, as well as a 6-hour restricted section. The restricted sections have a 100 watt power limit, and just one single-element antenna may be used. This Field Day coincides with similar field days in other European countries, so expect plenty of activity in the SSB contest segments of the HF bands.

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## **A Call to Sell**

The IRTS news bulletin is not the place for peddling advertisements, but because we can hope to hear a lot of new EI-callsigns on the air after the license exams in two weeks, it also means that our newly licensed experimenters will be looking for equipment.

Some will opt for brand new radios shipped in from abroad, associated with all the

usual headaches when thousand euros travel in a cardboard box. Buying a second hand rig locally may currently be the smarter choice.

Do have a critical look at the shelves in your shack, consider the future of your third spare transceiver you never unboxed. Or that 'impulse buy', which resulted in a week's worth of deaf-and-mute breakfasts, thus never commissioned.

Rather than wait for the next radio rally, send an ad, possibly with a relevant picture, for publication in our monthly EI-News.

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## **EMC and The Neighbours**

Here an brief summary of a report by Ralph Squillace, KK6ITB, about a ham radio operator in Florida who is off the air following a challenge by a neighbour in his retirement community that his amateur radio station is causing life-threatening interferences to the wireless communications in her insulin pump. A Consultant hired by the residential community known as 'On Top of the World' near Ocala, Florida, believes that RF from the ham station could have produced interference with the pump's delivery of measured insulin doses. The Type 1 diabetic claims that David Birge WB9UYK, had put her health at risk by operating his station.

David is now off the air in compliance with the community board's order to him. It remains unclear, however, whether the consultant's findings definitively proved that RFI was a factor.

In 2019, the US Food and Drug Administration issued an alert that some models of insulin pumps with unencrypted wireless connectivity had cybersecurity flaws that left them vulnerable to hacking that could modify the settings, a much more likely scenario.

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## **Three Amsat Reports**

AMSAT's will hold its 39th space symposium and is now accepting registrations for their event on the weekend of the 29th to the 31st of October in the Crown Plaza at the Minneapolis International Airport, Minnesota. AMSAT is issuing a call for papers to be presented and is encouraging students to actively participate.

Such events directly lead to results as described in the next news item:

Spanish hams are awaiting the launch of a pair of AMSAT-EA satellites, scheduled for this Thursday. Built by Students from the European University, and launched atop a

Firefly Rocket from the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, the satellites called GENESIS-L and GENESIS-N carry digital repeaters that can be used with CW due to the the unusual choice of Amplitude Shift Keying and CW for a low bandwidth of 50 Hertz.

The uplink to Genesis L is on 145.875 MHz and the downlink is on 436.875 and Genesis N listens on 145.888 MHz and transmits on 436.888 MHz. The Satellites also have experimental ion drives for propulsion experiments on board.

FUNcube-1, also know as AO-73 is going strong again, last week healthy signals were heard on the satellite's download frequency on 145.935MHz BPSK. The nominal uplink is 435.150 to 435.130 MHz LSB inverting, and the downlink is on 145.950 - 145.970 MHz USB. The passband may be up to 15kHz higher depending on the on-board temperatures. Lower temperatures mean higher frequencies. Please use a maximum uplink power of 5 watts to a 7 dBi gain antenna. More power is not needed to use the transponder!

Have a look at the amateur satellite activities at the webpage [amsat.org](http://amsat.org)

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## **Backyards On The Air**

Amateur Radio Newline Reporter Graham Kemp, VK4BB, asks what do SOTA activators do when the summits are off limits? In New Zealand, the answer is right there in their backyards. Nothing, not even a solar flare or even a pandemic, could stop the Backyards on the Air activation from going ahead recently in New Zealand.

The pandemic, in fact, was actually the inspiration for the event on Sunday the 22nd of August. It was born in the spring of 2020 as lockdown enveloped the nation. A group of SOTA activators looked for new options because their beloved summits had been declared off limits.

Organiser Mark Sullivan ZL3AB said this recent activation found participants once again in their backyards and after two hours of calling QRZ, some boasted contacts with the US and VK, as well as around New Zealand. It should go without saying that double points will be awarded to anyone who operates a full Delta loop in the backyard.

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## **Spotting Errors with DIGI modes**

Spots showing contacts that did not happen on the reported frequencies can occasionally be seen for the current DIGI modes. Typically, the reported band is wrong,

because the contact was likely not finished before band change. WSJT allows for a band change before the end of the contact, so it is just a reporting error when the contact gets uploaded.

Using JTDX such errors should be impossible, as no further upload takes place after the first decoded sequence. With WSJT-x one is on the safe side by briefly disabling the decode function, change band and then re-enabling the decoder.

Spots of FT4 transmissions that are accidentally reported as Q65 transmission are caused by a mismatch between JT-Alert in conjunction with the decoders. WSJT and JTDX use different mapping for reporting the mode, therefore one must use start the JT-Alert version that is compatible, either red for WSJT, or blue for JTDX.

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## **The 5MHz Newsletter**

The editor of The 5 MHz Newsletter Paul Gaskell, G4MWO, tells us that for the latest edition, number 27, for Summer 2021 is now available as a free pdf download from the 'External Links' section of the Wikipedia 60m Band page, but also from the RSGB 5 MHz page. Even between publications the wikipedia.org page is worth a look, it is considered to be the authoritative source of information on all things 60m Band.

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## **Pandemic Life Line**

Reflecting the expected increase in the numbers of licensed experimenters here in EI, other countries are also seeing dormant licenses being reactivated, and new candidates enlisting in exam courses. RSGB Representative Steve, M1ACB, has written a report about a successful campaign of the RSGB in cooperation with the british health authorities. The main theme of that campaign is to address isolation and loneliness during the pandemic restrictions. Having sent hundreds of well received press releases to media outlets, many publication reported about amateur radio as a means to stay in touch, there was extensive coverage by the BBC. This is now followed up with further stories in local media, highlighting activities in the communities. Steve tells of an extensive workload to achieve this, but the results show the effort is worth it, as over 5000 new candidates have now passed their exams.

Dave, K1ZZ representing the ARRL, confirms the positive experiences with online exams, now taking place side-by-side with the reintroduced in-person exams, resulting in a marked increase of licensed hams in the United States. This is echoed by the German DARC, their chief trainer DL3MBG reports that there are over 700 applicants queuing for their exam.

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## **On the Air**

The Trinidad and Tobago Amateur Radio Society is marking the 59th anniversary of the nation's independence with a special event station, using callsign 9Y59IND through September 12th. Listen on HF, the digital modes, 2 meters EME, DMR, D-STAR and Yaesu Fusion. QSLs will be via Logbook of the World only.

Members of the Emirates Amateur Radio Society are using the special event callsign A60EXPO between the 1st of September and the 1st of October to promote World Expo 2020 in Dubai. The expo itself runs from end of October until end of March next year. Send QSLs via EA7FTR.

During the month of September, Pascual, EA5WO, will be using the special event callsign AN5WAR from Valencia, Spain. Pascual is commemorating the 82nd anniversary of the start of the Second World War. He will be operating on various HF bands. QSL via LoTW or eQSL.

Also in September, Reiner DL2AAZ will be active as SV5/DL2AAZ from Rhodes (IOTA EU-001) on 40-10m SSB and CW with 300w and ground plane antennas, but he'll also use the QO-100 satellite. QSL to DL2AAZ

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## **The Propagation Horoscope**

The geomagnetic field was unsettled around the 27th of August due to effects from Coronal Hole number 1027 following the Coronal Mass Ejection on the 23rd of August. This year brought us 56 sunspots already, about three times as many compared to same periods during 2018 to 2020. Currently there are two large active regions in central view and six active regions in total, with a third large one just coming into view. Still, the proton flux is flat quiet and the background x-ray flux is at a low class B2 level, at best C class flares are expected. No obviously Earth-bound CMEs are observed. Auroral Kp index is around an average of 3. Expect fair to good and steady propagation on 20m, with the MUF rarely going above 15 Mhz. Inter-european conditions on topband and 80/60m will be fair to good, with moderate signals strength across the Atlantic, leading to a crowded 40m band. Sporadic E opportunities will be fewer now, but Tropo is still promising on VHF and UHF with the stationary high pressure over Scotland, there may also be paths to the south across the Bay of Biscay into the afternoon.

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That is the news for this week. Items for inclusion in next week's radio news can be submitted by email to [newsteam@irts.ie](mailto:newsteam@irts.ie) for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services. The deadline is midnight on Friday.

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